State Highway 210 Living Snow Fence Activity in Wilkin County.

Prepared by: Dan Gullickson-Mn/DOT Living Snow Fence Coordinator for December 11, 2007 Roadside for Wildlife Event.

SWCD accomplishments:

- 4.25 miles of living snow fence installed.
- 94 acres land enrolled in CRP.
- 125 people have been contacted.
- 60 tracts of land along the corridor received customized proposals.

Photo 1: Within the living snow fence protection zone, note the good visibility of the utility poles and bare pavement conditions. This photo was taken April 2, 2007 by Wilkin SWCD.

This Mn/DOT Plow Route:

- Averaged 28 snow and ice events per year over the last 5 years.
- 48 reported accidents over a period from 1995-2005. (1 fatal).
- 10 miles of blowing snow problem areas surveyed.

Photo 2: Outside the living snow fence protection zone, note the reduced visibility of the utility poles, on the left, and the road surface conditions becoming compacted due to blow ice. This photo was taken April 2, 2007 by Wilkin SWCD.

Living snow fence environmental benefits:

- less salt and fuel use during snow and ice removal operations.
- sequester carbon to help reduce atmospheric CO_2.
- create block cover for grassland wildlife species.
- improve water quality due to increased infiltration reducing runoff.

Photo 3: The grassy area near the utility poles is seeded into native tall grass prairie that retains the wind blown snow prior to reaching the road ditch. By seeding the snow catch area (in this case 200 feet wide) into native prairie can provide valuable grassland nesting bird habitat and it can help take the inconvenience out of farming (due to large agricultural equipment) the land between the shrubs and the highway right of way.

Other environmental benefit:

- reduce topsoil wind erosion to help the ditches drain better and the road last longer.

Photo 4: Topsoil wind erosion in ditches requires increased labor, equipment and fuel use for ditch cleanout diverting these resources from other road maintenance operations.